

COMMUNITY BRIEFING

Westminster Police Department

Andrew E. Hall, Chief of Police

admin@ewpd.org

January – March 2005

Volume 3

ssue 1

Words from Chief Hall

There are two items I want to bring to your attention as we wrap up the first quarter of 2005.

The first is our appreciation for your substantial support during difficult times. We are very grateful for the letters and emails of support we receive from you. We recognize the value of the trust you have placed in us, and we promise to live up to it. When, on occasion, we fail to meet an appropriate level of excellence, we will do whatever it takes to correct our mistakes and regain your complete confidence in us.



Chief Hall

The second item I want to report is our great success in finding highly qualified recruits to fill the unusual number of vacancies we experienced over the past two years. In fact, we have hired 16 officers since January 2004! This presents the Department with substantial training and supervision challenges which we are currently addressing.

As always, I value your feedback and comments. Please feel free to contact me at admin@ewpd.org.

Plans for a New Westminster Police Department Building

The current police building was originally built in 1968 with a design plan to house 60-65 employees within 26,025 square feet of space. Today, we have 192 employees working for the WPD.



Despite two modest remodeling projects in 1995 and 2002 that helped mitigate some of the problems, no amount of space reallocation can overcome the significant space deficiency.

Current deficiencies include:

- Undersized communications center
- Inadequate office space of in-house and community based resources
- Lack of secure parking for police and employee vehicles
- Insufficient on-site visitor parking
- Lack of proper air flow and climate control
- Male and female locker rooms are at maximum capacity
- Inadequate number of interview and conference rooms
- Insufficient space to process and store evidence
- Inadequate detention facility

With the full support of City Council, a consulting firm was hired in January 2005 to conduct a needs assessment, site analysis, and create design concepts for a new police building. Recently, the needs assessment was



completed, and results indicated that a facility of approximately 80,000 square feet is needed to meet the current and future needs of the Department. Staff growth, work flow efficiency, unit adjacencies, current design, and seismic standards for an essential service facility were reviewed for this study. All indicate a larger facility is necessary to ensure the efficient workflow of the Department and meet the demands of the future.

Upcoming Memorial Activities

In May of 2005, there will be three memorial ceremonies to honor fallen law enforcement officers. The events are open to the public, and staff from the WPD will be participating in all of the ceremonies to honor Officer Steve Phillips and Lieutenant Ron Weber, Sr.

- Orange County Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial (Santa Ana) on May 11, 2005.
- 29th Annual California Peace Officers' Memorial Ceremony (Sacramento) on May 5-6, 2005. The formal ceremony will take place at the "Memorial Monument" (located at 10th Street and Capital Mall) on May 6, 2005.
- National Law Enforcement Officers' Memorial (Washington D.C.) on May 12-15, 2005. The formal ceremony will take place in front of the U.S. Capitol on May 15, 2005.

Office Steve Phillips died on January 29, 2004, after his motorcycle was hit by a car. He will be memorialized at each service by having his name added to the Orange County, State, and National memorials.

Lieutenant Ron Weber, Sr., died on June 6, 2003, from his illness caused by exposure to toxic chemicals while serving as a narcotics detective. He will be honored at the National Memorial where his name will be added to the wall of the memorial.

For more information, go to:

The California Peace Officers' Memorial http://www.camemorial.org

Concerns of Police Survivors, Inc. http://www.nationalcops.org/npw.

WPD Hosts Police Chaplain Conference

On January 24-26th, 2005, the Westminster Police Department hosted the International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) at Calvary Chapel Pacific Coast, Westminster. Approximately 100 police chaplains from Nevada, California, and Arizona attended 3 days of law enforcement training and enrichment classes.



Detective Jim Mraz shares his expertise on the topic of domestic violence

Some of the classes taught were Domestic Violence, Narcotics, and Crisis Response. Several of the instructors were from WPD and other police agencies throughout Southern California.



Detective R.J. Garwood discusses his experience as a narcotics officer.

Assistant Chaplain Coordinator, Detective Cameron Knauerhaze and WPD Chaplain, Robert Benoun, coordinated the successful event. For more questions about the WPD Chaplain Program, please contact Detective Knauerhaze at 714-898-3315, ext. 337 or cameronk@ci.westminster.ca.us

Front Counter Hours

7:00am – 7:00pm Every Day

Phone Number

714-898-3315, extensions 371, 372, 373, 374, or 375

Orange County Board of Supervisors Honors Steve Phillips

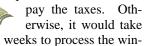
On the motion of Supervisor Lou Correa, the Orange County Board of Supervisors adopted a resolution on February 1, 2005, to "honor (the late Officer) Steven Phillips by acknowledging his life and dedication to justice and freedom for the people of Westminster and the Nation."

Crime Prevention Tip from WPD

CANADIAN LOTTERY



Recently, a local couple became the latest victims of the Canadian Lottery Scam. The couple received a phone call and was told that they had won a substantial amount of money in a Canadian lottery. In order to collect the money, a processing fee would be needed to process the claim and



nings. The couple was instructed to wire \$1,600 to an address in San Francisco. Not knowing that this was a scam, the couple completed the wire transfer.

The couple never received the award. Realizing that they had been victimized, the couple filed a report with the WPD. Through our investigation, it was revealed that the wire transfer was picked up not in San Francisco but in Montreal, Canada.

If you receive a phone call asking for money in order to collect more money, JUST HANG UP!

Remember: If it is too good to be true, then it probably is a scam!

Traffic Bureau

New Law in 2005 Headlight Use

Many new laws were put into effect on January 1, 2005. Here is a traffic law that impacts every motorist, and we want to bring your attention to it.

When you use your windshield wipers continuously... turn on your car headlights

California Vehicle Code dictates:

"Every motor vehicle (except a motorcycle) must **operate the headlights** whenever weather conditions prevent a driver from clearly discerning a person or other vehicle on the highway from a distance of 1000 feet, or when driving conditions require windshield wipers to be in **continuous** use."

Traffic Question

A few of our readers have submitted the following question, so we



asked our Traffic Bureau Lieutenant, Bill Lewis, for an answer. Here is what he said:

Q: "I was involved in a traffic accident, and the proper police report has been filed. Now, the at-fault driver and his insurance company won't pay for damages to my car, what do I do?"



A: The issue of who pays for the damages in this situation is a civil matter. Filing a police report for the traffic accident does not legally obligate any involved party to pay for damages. This is true even when the other driver flees the scene, but is eventually located

and charged with hit and run. That means that you may have to file a lawsuit in civil court in order to be compensated for the damages to your vehicle. The police report is useful in that it documents for the record what was reported to have occurred at the time of the accident. Another option would be to let your insurance take care of the damage to your vehicle, and have them pursue reimbursement from the other party.

Extra Tip

It is also wise to take down the other identifying driver's information at the time of the accident even when an officer responds and files a police report. There is a 7-10 day waiting period before a traffic accident report is cleared for release. Taking the information down at the scene will give you quicker access to the information you may need to start the damage repair process.

What's going on with the graffiti problem?



Recently, we have noticed an increase in the number of graffiti in our city. The graffiti is mostly attributed to an increase in "Tagging" groups and not gang activity. Tagging groups appear to be on the rise due to a large segment of our population entering crimeprone years. Tagging groups do not seek the same level of violence as criminal street gangs.

What can we all do? The WPD is stepping up our patrolling efforts around City parks to deal with these Tagging groups. But we need your help! The public needs to report graffiti in their neighborhoods so it can be quickly cleaned up. The number to call for Graffiti Removal is 714-895-2876. The motivation for tagging is to have a moniker recognized. So, a quick clean up defeats the objective of recognition and sends a message that the City will not tolerate the activity.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY



In the past three months, five pedestrians over the age of 60 years have been killed while crossing a roadway. Three were struck by cars while crossing the roadway outside of a crosswalk, and one was killed in a crosswalk, but against the "Don't Walk" signal. The cause of the fifth accident remains under investigation.

Here are a few pedestrian-safety "Do's" and "Don'ts" to remember when crossing a street.

<u>Do's</u>

- Do use a marked crosswalk or intersection whenever possible.
- Do cross only at intersections in a well-lighted area.
- Do use the pedestrian signals if available.
- Do report to the police department if a signal at a crossing does not work.
- Do stay on the sidewalk until you are ready to cross.
- Do cross only when the signal is green or "WALK." It is illegal to start crossing when the pedestrian signal is flashing.
- Do wear bright clothing if walking at night.

Don'ts

- Don't assume the driver sees you. Make sure the driver stops before crossing.
- Don't assume pedestrians always have the right-of-way.
 Pedestrians have the right-ofway only at crosswalks and intersections.
- Don't start crossing until you have reached the crosswalk.
- Don't cross when the pedestrian signal is 'flashing' "DON'T WALK."

Special Awards and Recognition

Karen Rackleff
Orange County
Property Officer of the Year



The Orange County chapter of C.A.P.E. (California Association for Property and Evidence) recognized our very own **Karen Rackleff** as the Orange County Property Officer of the Year.

Along with her co-worker **Holly Tran,** Karen was among the 6 nominated for property officers in the County. C.A.P.E promotes professionalism in property and evidence processing, gathering and sharing information, training and support.

Karen will now be among 9 nominees for the State of California "Property Officer of the Year" award, which will be announced in March. *Congratulations and good luck, Karen!* Karen and Holly do an excellent job and we are proud of both of them.

Westminster Chamber of Commerce: Public Safety Award

On February 15, 2005, the Westminster Chamber of Commerce recognized three WPD officers with the Public Safety Award. This award is given to individuals who have provided exemplary public service throughout the year.



From Left to Right: Chief Hall, Officer Richard Mize, Traffic Investigator Douglas Johnson, and Detective Cameron Knauerhaze.

Officer Richard Mize is recognized for his work on restructuring the Field Training Program for new officers. Traffic Investigator Douglas Johnson is recognized for his role as the police department liaison to assist and support the widow of Officer Steve Phillips. Detective Cameron Knauerhaze is recognized for his extensive work in the investigation and arrest of a suspect who embezzled \$275,000 from a local business.

Westminster Police Officers Association (WPOA) Awards

Here are the winners of the annual WPOA Awards (2004). The winners are nominated and voted on by their peers and colleagues.

Supervisor of the Year Lieutenant Kevin Baker

Officer of the Year Bill Eifert

Civilian Employee of the Year Stephanie Subia

Reserve Officer of the Year Paul Payne

Ron Weber Investigator of the Year

Alan Iwashita

Athlete of the Year RJ Garwood and Craig Turner

MADD Award

Mothers Against Drunk Driving, MADD, honored **Officers Stan Watanabe and Brian Emerson** with the MADD Award on March 2, 2005 for their lifesaving work in removing drunk drivers from the roadways. Last year, Officers Watanabe and Emerson made 56 and 34 DUI arrests respectively.



Officers B. Emerson and S. Watanabe posed with MADD Representatives Gail Martinez and Tracy Miller.

Quality Customer Service Award

Police Officer Jason Stouffer

During an investigation,

Officer Stouffer came into contact with an elderly man who lived alone and in poor condition. After realizing that the man had not eaten in one week, Jason took it upon himself to heat up a frozen dinner, contact family members, and arrange for possible assistance from the Westminster Senior Center.

Police Officer Cord Vandergrift

On his way back from lunch, Officer Vandergrift saw a car narrowly miss hitting an elderly man who was crossing the street against a red light. Although he was not in uniform or a marked police car, Cord stopped to check on the disoriented man and then gave him a ride home.

From the Desk of the Patrol Division "Watch Commander"



Lieutenant Al Panella

"Where are they???"

As a Watch Commander, I am often contacted by citizens who have questions about why it took so long for a police officer to arrive at their home or place of business when they called for service. More often than not, the citizens I have spoken with have called for service related to crimes where no emergency exists. Perhaps the following will shed some light on response time issues, and clear up any questions you may have.

Our professional dispatchers apply a "prioritization" concept to every call received. Prioritization involves placing importance on one type of call over another for reasons such as urgency of needs, severity of crime, and amount of danger to the public. This will help determine how soon certain calls are dispatched to police officers. For instance, dispatchers may have several minor theft related calls ready to be dispatched, but before those calls can be radioed to available officers, more serious crimes are reported such as assaults in progress and domestic violence. Because of the urgency of "in progress crimes against persons," officers will be sent to those calls first, thus delaying our response to lower priority calls.

As you can see, response to higher "priority" calls may delav our attention to your service needs, but rest assured that we consider ALL calls for service important, and will send police personnel to you as soon as possible.

Fact or Myth? Frequently Asked Questions

Let this column help separate facts and myths about police work! Submit your questions admin@ewpd.org.

Myth. If I change the court date for my traffic ticket, the officer won't show up, and I will win my case automatically.

Fact. Not true! Attending court is part of a police officer's job and he/she is expected to appear regardless of changes to court dates.



Myth. Only a Westminster Police Officer can write tickets and make arrests in Westminster.

Fact. Police departments have collateral agreements with each other, so no jurisdiction violations are made when officers from another city write tickets or make arrests here in Westminster. Likewise, our officers can do the same at Stanton, Fountain Valley, Garden Grove, or anywhere else.

Child-Proof Your Gun



Project Childsafe is a nationwide program intended to ensure the safe and responsible storage of guns in your home (Go to www.projectchildsafe.org). This cable-style gun lock (pictured below) was developed by the National Shooting Sports Foundation and funded by the U.S. Department of Justice.



It is the responsibility of every gun owner to ensure the safe storage of their guns in their homes. By using a childsafe lock, you reinforce an additional line of defense in protecting your children in the home.

This gun lock is FREE to everyone and available for pickup at the police department. For more information, contact Police Services Officer Ken Edwards at 714-898-3315, **590** ext. KEdwards@ci.westminster.ca.us

The VINE Program

Notifies you when offenders are released from custody

The VINE Program (Victim Information and Notification Everyday) is a free and anonymous telephone service that provides crime victims and concerned citizens with information and notification regarding (a) offender custody or case information, and (b) the offender's custody status. The service can also provide automatic notification to registered users of a change in offender custody or case status.

To register to receive notification of offender custody changes, you

need to call the VINE line (1-800-**721-8021)** and provide a phone number where you can be reached, along with a 4-digit Personal Identification Number. You will be asked to provide the PIN when VINE contacts you. This 24-hour, operator assisted service is available in English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

Employment Opportunities

Thanks to the tremendous amount of interest and the number of qualified applicants, the WPD has now closed the opening for Police Officer.

However, we are still accepting applications for Police Dispatcher.



DISPATCHER

Applicants for police dispatchers must meet these two requirements:

- Type 35 w.p.m. corrected.
- Graduation from high school or equivalent plus one year of responsible general clerical experience or public contact work.

The Ideal Candidate

- Comfortable talking to the public.
- React quickly, efficiently, and calmly in emergency situations.
- Ability to speak and write in a clear and concise manner.
- Accurate listening and comprehension skills.
- Multi-task oriented.
- Elicit information from persons in varied states of mind.
- Motivated and detail oriented, with a strong work ethic.
- Learn and utilize police codes.

- Demonstrated computer entry skills.
- Ability to work a flexible work schedule.

If you meet these qualifications and are serious in pursing a career in law enforcement, please contact Personnel Officer Cord Vandergrift at 714-898-3315, ext. 395, or CVandergrift@ci.westminster.ca.us

National Stalking Awareness Month

During January, the National Center for Victims of Crime (NCVC) recognized the 2nd National Stalking Awareness Month. The WPD joins the NCVC in raising awareness on this serious and deadly crime. Materials on this topic are available to the public at the department front lobby, or they can be downloaded from the NCVC Website (www.ncvc.org).

SEX PREDATOR CAUGHT!

On January 25, 2005, Detective Alan Iwashita investigated a sexual assault that occurred at the Westminster Mall. Using the suspect description from a witness, his police training, and a little bit of instinct, Detective Iwashita went to a business where he felt the suspect might visit. Shortly into the surveillance, an individual matching the suspect description arrived at the business. After de-

termining that the subject was the suspect, Detective Iwashita arrested him.



It turns out the suspect contacted his victims using an internet chat room. After creating a profile and entering the chat room, Detective Iwashita found the suspect's profile. With the help of the site's administrator, Detective Iwashita was able to obtain the suspect's list of over 400 online "friends" he had communicated with. Ap-



proximately 400 turned out to be females, 300 of which claimed to reside in Orange County. A

generic message was sent to all 400 females asking if they had been victimized by the suspect. We are still awaiting response from the letter. Through our investigation, we found out that other agencies in Orange County have open sexual assault cases related to this suspect.

This suspect used aggressive tactics to sexually assault his young victims. Because of the tenacity of Detective Iwashita, this suspect will no longer victimize other members of our community.

MEGAN'S LAW How to check for sex offenders in your neighborhood

Megan's Law requires all released sex offenders to register at the local law enforcement agency of the city where they live. Depending on your residence, you may be notified via flyers passed out by the police. Or, you can come to the police department to access the sex offender database.

Thanks to the California Attorney General's Office, a public online mapping system is now available so that you can search for information on serious and high-risk sex offenders from any computer connected to the Internet. Go to http://www.meganslaw.ca.gov/disclaimer.htm and you will be able to find the offender's photograph and personal information, along with a home address and a dot on the map indicating the home's location.

For more information about Megan's Law and the sex offender database at the WPD, contact Detective Alan Iwashita at (714) 898-3315 ext. 306 or, for a \$10 fee, the California Sex Offender Database (1-900-448-3000).

Police Department <u>Division News</u>

Administrative Services Bureau (ASB)

The Administrative Services Bureau (ASB) is comprised of a lieutenant, a sergeant, two officers, two civilians, two reserve officers, and three interns. In addition to overseeing the *Property Bureau* and *Forensic Services Unit*, ASB handles the following tasks:

RECRUITMENT & HIRING

Hiring new police personnel is a complex procedure. ASB is responsible for recruiting and processing applicants for all positions at the police department.

TRAINING

ASB is in charge of coordinating on-going training for the entire department. Officers, dispatchers and civilian employees all attend training classes on a regular basis. ASB maintains training records for all employees and coordinates inhouse training such as firearms range qualification.

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

ASB oversees several programs such as Neighborhood Watch, Citizen's Academy, and our award winning violence prevention program SHIELD. All requests for appearances at community events and schools are coordinated by ASB staff.

LOGISTICS

ASB is responsible for making sure that the police department has the supplies and equipment needed to provide quality service to the public. The bureau handles purchasing and maintenance of equipment and uniforms, maintenance of police vehicles, and researching new equipment as it becomes available.



Ask Your
Questions
jackd@ewpd.org

(714) 898-3315 extension 723

Lt. Jack Davidson

Question: "How do you handle close calls when driving?"

Answer: Below are some of the most common problems that drivers encounter on the open road and while driving the California Freeway system:

- Heavy Rain: Hydroplaning
- Another Driver Runs a Stoplight
- Accident in Front
- Drunk Driver Ahead

(In order to give the readers as much information as possible about each scenario, I will talk about the first two today and address the other two in the next issue.)

HEAVY RAIN: Hydroplaning

Any downpour brings the risk of hydroplaning. All of a sudden the car feels as if it is floating, and the steering wheel seems useless.

Why does it happen? Car tires have treads to maintain their grip on wet surfaces. Grooves in the tire treads channel out water from under the tire so it stays in contact with the pavement. However, if the water becomes deeper than the tread and you're driving above a certain speed, the channel may be overwhelmed. When that happens, the tire is floating on water instead of gripping the pavement. By

ing have also become useless. Hence, your car feels like it is floating and you lose control of your steering wheel.

So, what do you do? The remedy to hydroplaning is to ease off of the gas, hold the steering wheel steady, and wait it out. A few

heart-stopping seconds will pass and the tires will grab again, giving you back control of the vehicle. Keep in mind that underinflated tires are especially prone to hydroplaning, so remember to check your tire pressure regularly.

ANOTHER DRIVER RUNS A STOPLIGHT



When an accident occurs at an intersection, it is often because a driver runs a stop sign or red light. Never assume that other drivers will yield just because you have the right of way.

What should you do? The best advice is to get into the habit of checking left and right before you drive through an intersection, *even when the light is in your favor*. If you see someone is not stopping, you will have the time to react.

New Faces at WPD

Officers-in-Training

On February, 28, 2005, Officers Mark Hennemuth, Paul Walker, James Delk, and Dispatcher Leticia Hernandez became the newest additions to the Westminster Police Department. With their diverse backgrounds and unique skill sets, they will prove to be valuable assets for the WPD and the community.



From Left to Right: Chief Hall, Officer Walker, Dispatcher Hernandez, Officer Delk and Officer Hennemuth at the swearing in ceremony.

Officer Hennemuth has a Bachelors Degree from the University of California, Irvine, and recently graduated from the Police Academy. The other two officers come to us with extensive law enforce-

ment experience; Officer Walker worked for the Department of Motor Vehicles for 6 years, and Officer Delk worked as a park ranger for the Manhattan Beach Police Department, and served in the US Army for 6 years.

Police Dispatcher

Leticia Hernandez graduated from the Goldenwest Dispatch Academy in 2004. Leticia has worked at UCI Family Health Center for the last seven years and she is a fluent Spanish speaker.

Retirement

When Thomas Pixler began his career as a police officer, there were still strawberry fields here in Westminster. That was 1974, and after 31 years as a police officer, all with the WPD, Sergeant Tom Pixler is retiring in March 2005.



Sergeant Tom Pixler

Tom spent a total of 14 years in the Detective Bureau and was a member of the SWAT team for 5 years. He begins his retirement by moving out of state with his wife, and has plans to do a lot of traveling. We wish him a happy retirement, and thank him for his exemplary work in making Westminster a safer and better community!

Animal Safehouse Program

Since most domestic violence shelters are unable to accept pets, many victims of abuse may remain with a batterer because they fear their pet will be abused if left behind. The Animal Safehouse Program provides temporary shelter for pets of victims of domestic violence. It allows battered individuals to seek shelter, medical

treatment and counseling, knowing their pets are safe. For more information, contact the Rancho Coastal Humane Society (in San Diego County) at 760-753-6413, or visit them online at www.rchumanesociety.org

WESTMINSTER EXPLORER POST

On March 2, 2005, Westminster Explorer Captain Scott Gump retired after serving seven years in the Explorer Post.



A plaque was presented to him by the Advisors in recognition of his contribution to the Post. Scott is a valuable member of the WPD, and we wish him the best as he begins his training at the Police Academy.

Last Call for Citizen Academy Sign Up

There are still a few spots available for the next Citizen Academy!

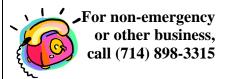
The Citizen Academy is an 11-week program designed to open up a positive, interactive dialogue between the police department and members of the community. Through lectures and hands-on experience, you will learn about:

- Calls for service and 911
- Laws of Arrest
- Use of Force
- Police Discretion, Ethics
- Officer Safety
- Gangs
- SWAT
- Narcotics
- Criminal Investigations
- DUI
- Forensics

Sign up now! Contact Police Services Officer Ken Edwards at 714-898-3315, ext. 590, or KEdwards@ci.westminster.ca.us

Police Department Phone Numbers

If you have an emergency, call 9-1-1!



General Information	ext. 425
Dispatch	ext. 326
Records Bureau	ext. 371
Traffic Division	ext. 339
Administration	ext. 301

E-mail List

If you are not on our Community Briefing e-mail list and would like to be, please let us know by sending your name and e-mail address to admin@ewpd.org.



Mayor Margie L. Rice Mayor Pro-Tem Russell Paris Councilman Frank Fry Councilman Kermit Marsh Councilman Andy Quach

We want to express our sincere appreciation to the Westminster City Council for their support and commitment to public safety!

Community Briefing is a newsletter produced quarterly by the Westminster Police Department. Its main purpose is to share information about the Department with the community we serve.

Further questions or comments regarding the contents of this newsletter should be forwarded to the Research & Planning Unit at (714) 898-3315 ext. 460 or admin@ewpd.org.